

REMARKS

Prior to a first examination of the continuation application filed herewith, please enter the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 4-5, 12, 18, and 23-24 have been cancelled without prejudice by this preliminary amendment. Claim 21 has been amended. The first instance of claim 16 has been amended. Accordingly claims 1-3, 6-11, 13-17, and 19-22 are currently pending in this continuation application. Of the pending claims, claims 1, 8, 15, and 21 are independent claims. Applicant believes no new matter has been added by this paper.

I) Continuation Application

The application papers filed herewith are a true copy of the prior complete application filed on December 21, 1999 having Serial Number 09/469,961. This continuation application is filed under Rule 1.53(b) and claims the benefit of the Patent Application No. 09/469,961 filed December 21, 1999 under 35 U.S.C. 120 and 37 CFR 1.78(a), which claims the benefit of Serial No. 08/994,503 and its filing date of December 19, 1997.

II) Drawing Amendments

Applicant has amended Figures 1, 2A, 2B, 2C, 5, and 6 as described herein above. These drawing changes were previously accepted in the parent patent application.

Applicant herewith transmits a complete set of formal drawings, including the drawing amendments made herein, to overcome any drawing objections that would otherwise be made prior to scanning.

III) Specification

In the Related Patent Applications section, on page 2, line 4, the paragraph therein has been amended to reflect the cross-noted applications to which this divisional patent application claims the benefit thereof.

Applicant has further amended the specification to correct inconsistent reference numbering in the paragraphs beginning at Page 8, line 20; Page 9, line 4; Page 9, line 14; Page 10, line 21; Page 11, line 14; Page 14, line 8; Page 15, line 22; Page 16, line 9; Page 16, line 21; and Page 19, line 5. These amendments also are made to be consistent with the usage in the drawings.

Applicant has amended the specification to correct grammatical errors, typos and misspellings in the paragraphs beginning at Page 4, line 5.

Applicant has amended the specification to further update the references to patent applications within the specification in the paragraphs beginning at Page 2, line 4; Page 12, line 18; and Page 19, line 20.

IV) Claims

Applicant has cancelled claims 4-5, 12, 18, and 23-24 without prejudice as these were previously prosecuted in the parent patent application.

Applicant has amended the first instance of claim 16 to be properly numbered as claim 15.

CONCLUSION

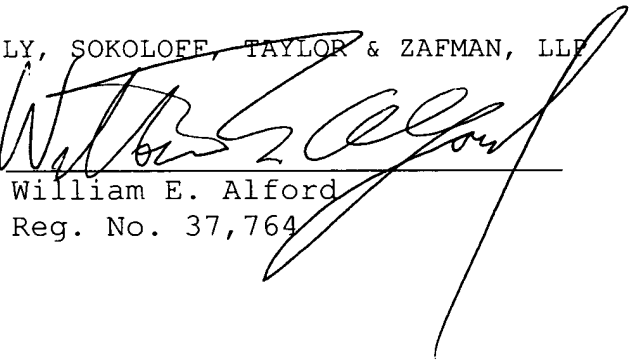
The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned counsel by telephone at (714) 557-3800 should there be any questions.

Please charge any shortage in fees in connection with the filing of this paper to Deposit Account 02-2666 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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